

August 21, 2001

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room TW-A325
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Permitted *Ex Parte* Conversations: PP Docket No. 00-67 (Compatibility Between Cable Systems And Consumer Electronics Equipment)

Dear Secretary Salas:

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206, notice is hereby electronically submitted to PP Docket No. 00-67 regarding an *ex parte* presentation by representatives of the Consumer Electronics Association ("CEA").

On Thursday, August 16, 2001, Michael Petricone, Vice President, Technology Policy, Government and Legal Affairs of CEA; Ralph Justus, Vice President, Technology & Standards of CEA; Peter Fannon, Chair of CEA's TV/VCR Caucus and representative of Panasonic/Matsushita Electronics Corporation of America; and the undersigned, David Nall, representing CEA, met with Kenneth Ferree, Chief, Cable Services Bureau and members of his staff: William Johnson, Deputy Chief; Tom Horan, Legal Advisor; Deborah Klein, Chief, Consumer Protection and Competition Division; Steve Broeckart, Deputy Chief, Consumer Protection and Competition Division; Adam Candev, Consumer Protection and Competition Division; and John Wong, Chief, Engineering and Technical Services Division.

CEA's representatives provided Mr. Ferree and his staff with an overview of CEA's position on cable-consumer electronics compatibility and the important role this factor plays in the transition to digital television. Specifically, CEA suggested that consumers would be served by a wide array of choices in digital video equipment available in a competitive marketplace that could be purchased with the assurance that such equipment would operate effectively when connected to digital cable systems. To achieve this goal, CEA suggested that digital set-top boxes and similar equipment provided by cable operators should be required to comply with exactly the same standards that the cable industry seeks to impose upon manufacturers of independently-supplied cable-compatible consumer electronics equipment. CEA noted that such standards, developed by the cable industry, are not in final form and continue to be revised. Moreover, some of these standards that could be considered completed refer to specifications contained in other standards that have not been fully developed. In addition, the Cable Labs certification process also

requires compliance with specifications that are not completed or encompass features and functions not related to the delivery of video programming via cable service. CEA suggested that finalized, minimal standards for the delivery of standard digital cable services (basic and premium video programming and impulse-pay-per-view), that address physical interconnection and access to program guide information and that could readily be enforced by Commission action, are necessary before a nation-wide market for digital "cable-ready" equipment could develop that would promote the transition to digital television.

CEA also noted the absence of any meaningful implementation on the part of the cable industry of the agreements reached on February 22, 2000,¹ in that there has been no effort to make available for carriage the PSIP (Program and System Information Protocol) information that the February 22 agreements were intended to support and no action by any major cable operator in those areas identified in the PSIP agreement as areas where technical changes and system redesign were needed to ensure proper reception of PSIP by cable-ready receivers.

Please include a copy of this notice in the record of the above-referenced proceeding. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ David A. Nall
David Alan Nall

cc: Kenneth Ferree, Chief, Cable Services Bureau
William Johnson, Deputy Chief, Cable Services Bureau
Tom Horan, Legal Advisor, Cable Services Bureau
Deborah Klein, Division Chief, Consumer Protection and Competition Division
Steve Broeckaert, Deputy Division Chief, Consumer Protection and Competition Division
Adam Candev, Consumer Protection and Competition Division
John Wong, Division Chief, Engineering and Technical Services Division

¹ See Letter from Gary Shapiro, President and CEO of CEA, and Robert Sachs, President and CEO of NCTA, to William Kennard, FCC Chairman (Feb. 22, 2000).